

## **What is "Stay and Play?"**

That is a new policy that requires all teams and attendees to make their hotel reservation through THS, the approved housing service of USAV.

## **Why Stay and Play this year?**

The Stay and Play policy has numerous beneficial affects, including:

- \* It provides USAV through THS accurate tracking of all of the room nights generated by the tournament. This is very beneficial because it increases USAV's negotiating position with each city bidding on the different tournaments, not only in the cost and availability of the venue but for decreasing or eliminating other costs related to running the event. That keeps the tournament on budget, without raising entry fees. Entry fees have not seen an increase in six years yet the cost of doing business has increased over the last six years.
- \* It gives THS tremendous leverage in the negotiation of rates. The affects in Miami after Stay and Play was announced to the hotel community included:
  - The rates for 18 hotels previously contracted were able to be negotiated down by an average of \$24.00.
  - 19 additional hotels offering rates below \$100.00 came forward to offer rooms. The original CVB bid had only 5 hotels on it under \$100.00.
  - Overall the average rates for all of the hotels on the Official Hotel List dropped from \$129.44 to \$105.55 from the original CVB bid.
  - The hotels on the Official Hotel List are selling rates direct to the public on average \$71.88 higher than the tournament rate, based on the most recent calls to all hotels made every two weeks by THS.

## **How do the hotels get selected for the "Official Hotel List?"**

USAV and THS first sets a ceiling rate each year to establish the highest rate that will be accepted from each hotel. Obviously that changes by product quality and location. In Miami, add to that the oceanfront location. This information is communicated to the CVB (or Sports Commission) that sends out the RFP (Request for Proposal) to each of their city's hotels.

After receiving the bids from the CVB, THS evaluates each bid with the goal of having the best and closest hotels at a rate no higher than the ceiling that was set. All other hotels, depending on their location and product, needs to be priced at a lower rate. After the hotels from the original CVB bid are successfully contracted, THS creates a new list of hotels that would be of most interest to the teams/clubs but that did not bid. THS contacts them directly to see if at that point they are interested in bidding, and attempts to negotiate a usable contract with each of them. This final list is then approved by USAV, and the Official Hotel List is posted when the USAV tournament information goes live.

At a later time if a new hotel opens, or a hotel that previously had not bid comes forward to offer rooms, THS will have the discussion with that hotel, and in some cases, will add them. However there is good historical tracking of the number of hotel rooms that are used each year, and it is not to USAV or THS's advantage to contract for many more rooms than what is expected to be used. If that happens, then it leaves a bad taste with the city regarding the event, and could negatively affect future negotiations for USAV to bring this or another of its events back to this area.

## **Why are certain Hotels NOT on the approved Hotel list?**

Every hotel in each city has the opportunity to bid on USAV's events, done through the city's CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau). The primary reasons a hotel does not get contracted by THS include:

- \* They did not submit a bid to the CVB for whatever reason.

- \* They submitted a bid for too small of a block of rooms and/or at too high a rate for their location/product.
- \* They could not guarantee the roomtypes the teams need - rooms with 2 beds or at the very least a room with a king bed and a comfortable pullout sofa.
- \* They would not agree to the terms and conditions in the contract that USAV and THS require.
- \* THS has contracted for the maximum number of rooms that are needed.

### **What are USAV's and THS's "Requirements" to work with a Hotel?**

USAV and THS have created a set of terms and conditions that each hotel is required to adhere to. They are very detailed, and some of them include:

- \* A cancellation deadline of 30 days, to allow contracts to be cancelled or reduced if there is little or no pick-up in a particular hotel. This protects USAV from having to pay performance fees when it is impossible to know exactly which of the 4,500+ hotel room blocks for the Girls JO's will actually be used.
- \* A guarantee that the rate THS is able to negotiate is the lowest rate the hotel will be selling over our dates. That contract term alone lowers the rate quote of many hotels, because if a hotel quotes the Girls JO's rate too high, it seriously reduces their ability to sell the rest of their rooms to other business because THAT rate (which must be higher than the tournament rate) will be too high. Also, THS is able to use this clause in the contract as they monitor the rates each hotel sell direct to the public - a clause that requires the tournament rate to be the lowest, or the hotel has to drop their rate if they quote below that.
- \* A detailed set of comp guarantees for official and staff at every hotel in order to keep the costs of the tournament down and the application fees to the teams as low as possible
- \* Each hotel contract establishes the state the hotel is located as the location of a court case in the event either party (THS or the hotel) feels there have been damages of some sort. THS removes this, allowing a case to be started in whichever state the party starting the suit to be the place of jurisdiction. THS has used this in the past to get refunds and other problems resolved when a hotel does not deliver the product and services as contracted for its customers.

### **What is the harm in me contacting a Hotel NOT on the list and booking direct?**

Having 4,500+ usable hotel rooms available so the CVB can bid on the Girls JO's is no small task. To do so, cities often have to put their bid together 2-4 years before the tournament they are awarded. The Stay and Play policy rewards the hotels in a city that partner with the CVB, who will agree to bid rooms that far out AND to hold the rooms aside until USAV selects the city for each year's tournament. The Stay and Play policy will fill more rooms at these hotels, which improves the chances that the city will bid on future USAV events.

Conversely, if a team/club was allowed to book at any hotel, this takes away rooms from the hotels that most deserve to be part of the tournament, who have each made a huge financial commitment to their city and USAV. Conversely, hotels that offer lower rated rooms in the months before a tournament have committed nothing, and have the luxury of knowing their last minute availability for our dates. The bottom-line is that the tournament could not take place in a city without the hotels that become an Official Hotel one or more years before each tournament.

Lastly, often teams/clubs that have booked direct in the past have agreed to higher rates that USAV and THS would accept. That has the end result in the past of motivating some hotels to specifically NOT bid on the tournament, knowing their rates would not be accepted by the tournament, so they could get a higher rate from the teams. That can undermine the relationships between USAV and THS with the hotels on the Official list, who have all agreed to the rate ceiling that has been imposed.

One real-life story in Miami is at a hotel that a club negotiated a \$139.00 rate at direct, prior to the Stay and Play policy being announced. Thanks to Stay and Play, that hotel is on the Official hotel list now at \$99.00.

### **Why can't I get a confirmed reservation for rooms for Girls JO's before my team qualifies?**

Primarily so the rooms are not all taken up and hoarded by teams that ultimately does not qualify. There are over 3800 teams that attempt to qualify for 788 spots in the tournament. On USAV's direction, THS institutes a waitlist system that works like this: Teams and clubs can make their reservation for whatever hotel they want as soon as the Official Hotel List is posted on the THS and USAV websites. Those reservations, each entered with USAV's FJ code, are recorded as a "waitlisted" reservation. Each week from early March to the end of April, USAV forwards a list of the FJ codes to THS for all teams that just qualified. THS enters the FJ Codes, and the reservation system automatically confirms those teams for their first hotel choice available at that time.

There are pluses and minuses in the timing of qualifying. First, USAV gives THS a list of the clubs that historically bring 6 or more teams to Girls JO's each year. Those clubs are given consideration on booking rooms in order to keep their large blocks in one hotel. Otherwise they likely will be blocked in multiple hotels after each team qualifies. For those smaller clubs that qualify later in the season it is hard to have patience but as the larger clubs define their needs rooms open up in hotels that the later qualifying team(s) may have as their first choice. The Girls event is like a large chess game in utilizing the rooms and requests of each team/club.